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BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

March 3, 2026

YCCD Supervisors Present: Margaret Lenz, Ron Richards, Sonya Shaw, Darrell Smith, & Chester Zwirn

Supervisors Absent: None

Ex officio Members: None

Staff Present: Tanya Fell, Shirley Deason, and Rafael Trejo

Call to Order:

President Lenz declared a quorum present and convened the meeting of the Yuma County Conservation District at 5:10 p.m. at the Wray NRCS Conference Room.

Update to Mileage Calendar:

Updates were made by each board member to the mileage calendar.

Approval of Agenda:

After adding **Farm Bill DCT Off-Boarding** under **New Business**, approval of the agenda was made on a motion by Supervisor Richards. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Shaw and carried unanimously.

Approval of Previous Month's Minutes:

Supervisor Shaw moved to approve the February 9, 2026, regular meeting minutes and the annual meeting minutes from February 9, 2026. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Richards and carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report:

Financial Statement and Pay Bills: District Manager Fell presented the monthly financials. Supervisor Smith moved to accept the financial report and pay the March bills. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Shaw and carried unanimously. The current bills paid are:

General Account:

- Employee Payroll
- Cliff Theater
- High Plains Community Beekeepers
- Republican River Watershed Association-Annual Dues
- Premier Accounting
- Rhonda Davis -Tree Supply Refund
- Curt Soehner-Tree Refund

Grant Account:

- Aero Applicators, Inc.

NRCS Report:

Daniel Palic was unable to attend the meeting but provided a written report for the board's review.

OLD BUSINESS:

Grants & Updates: District Manager Fell gave updates on the following grants:

- **Bonny Grazing Project:** Three grant applications have been submitted to fund the project at the Bonny Reservoir – the Demonstration Grant, HPP Grant and the Colorado Water Plan Grant. The Conservation District has been awarded the CACD Demonstration Grant but is still waiting to hear on the HPP Grant and the Colorado Water Plan Grant.
- **Restore Colorado Grant 2024 -NFWF:** The Conservation District was awarded a \$320,000 grant for Rejuvra across all of Yuma County. The Conservation District requested and received an extension through the end of the year to complete the project. SAFE signups are currently not being accepted due to the absence of a biologist; therefore, any remaining SAFE funds will be transitioned to spraying.

The Conservation District has received reimbursement from NFWF for the Fall 2025 spraying and is issuing payment to Aero Applicators for services rendered.

- **CSCB Supplemental Matching Grant 2025:** The Yuma Conservation District, under the administration of the Yuma County Conservation District, was awarded a \$50,000 grant to support tree restoration efforts. Several producers have indicated interest in applying for this grant.
- **CSCB 50/50 Matching Grant 2026:** The Conservation District was awarded a \$50,000 CSCB 50/50 Matching Grant for 2026 to support the installation of water tanks, pipelines, solar pumps, and wireless tank monitoring devices. These improvements will benefit the producers within both the Yuma Conservation District and the Yuma County Conservation District. DCT Trejo has called all producers to begin implementation.
- **Demonstration Grant (Cheatgrass)-CACD/NRCS:** The Conservation District was awarded a grant in the amount of \$10,000 for Cheatgrass Control Test Plots. The project will be started in the Spring with the assistance of ENVU.
- **Climate Resiliency Grant-Co. Dept of Ag:** The Conservation District was awarded a \$30,000 Climate Resiliency Grant through the Colorado Department of Agriculture for the installation of living snow fences. District Manager Fell contacted the Colorado Department of Transportation on March 3, 2026, to explore potential assistance and coordination opportunities for the project.

- **Demonstration Grant (Virtual Fence) – CACD/NRCS:** The Conservation District was awarded a grant in the amount of \$10,000 for Virtual Fence, Portable Corral System & Water Structure at Bonny Reservoir.

Upcoming Grant Opportunities: District Manager Fell gave updates on the following grant opportunities:

- **NRCS Locally Led Targeted Conservation Project:** A locally led Targeted Conservation Project Proposal for fiscal year 2026 was submitted by the Yuma County Conservation District in the amount of \$500,000 for Cheatgrass Control, which would encompass Yuma County, Phillips County and Sedgwick County,
- **Habitat Partnership Program - CPW:** The application has been submitted in the amount of \$50,555 for virtual fence, and water structure at Bonny Reservoir.
- **Restore Colorado Grant – NFWF:** The application has been submitted in the amount of \$349,242.77 for a watershed wide grant for cheatgrass control.
- **Colorado Water Plan Grants - CWCB:** The application has been submitted in the amount of \$112,500 for virtual fence, portable corral system and water structure at Bonny Reservoir.
- **Technical Assistance Grant- NACD:** This grant would fund a dedicated employee position to provide technical services on behalf of the district. The application has been submitted in the amount of \$121,037.50 Awards are expected to be announced in March 2026.
- **Soil Health and Optimizing Water Grants – Colorado Department of Ag:** The grant has been submitted in the amount of \$50,000 for an educational project for 5th – 8th grade students.

Leadership Training Reschedule:

Leadership training presented by Stephanie Scott has been tentatively rescheduled to May 12, 2026, or later.

Workshops:

- **Pesticide Applicator Workshop:** The Conservation District has scheduled a pesticide applicator workshop for March 10, 2026.
- **Landowner Dam Easement Education Workshop:** The Board discussed the need to hold a workshop for landowners with properties near dams to emphasize the importance of keeping easement areas clear of brush to ensure water flow is not impeded during significant rain events. Plat maps will be used to identify landowners with easements in these areas.
- **Estate/Succession Plan Workshop:** The Conservation District discussed hosting an estate and succession planning workshop targeted toward younger producers. District Manager Fell will contact CSU Extension Specialist Jeffrey Tranel to inquire about potential dates in mid-November or early December.
- **Irrigation Workshop:** The Conservation District discussed the possibility of hosting an irrigation workshop.

Host CSCB Solar & Agrivoltaics tour for the Northeast Region:

District Manager Fell will follow up with Jordan Macknick (NREL) and Jeff Risley (Executive Director, Renewable Energy Farmers of America) about serving as speakers for an Agrivoltaics workshop.

Tree Sale:

District Manager Fell provided an update on the 2026 Tree Sale. The Wray FFA has agreed to assist again this year with the tree distribution. The Conservation District will contact the nurseries to confirm scheduled tree delivery dates.

2026 Annual Meeting Review:

The Annual Meeting was held on February 9, 2026, at the Cliff Theater in Wray. The meeting included a screening of *Kiss the Ground*, presentation of awards to Poster Contest winners, and recognition of the District's Conservationists of the Year. The movie has since been posted to the Conservation District's website and shared on the District's Facebook page.

Supervisors discussed possible adjustments for next year's meeting, including ordering a different meal and considering a concert or other entertainment as an alternative to a movie screening.

NACD Conference:

District Manager Fell attended the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas, on February 15-19, 2026. District Manager Fell gave a report on workshops attended.

Republican River Watershed Association Spring Meeting:

The Spring Meeting of the Republican River Watershed Association is scheduled for March 26, 2026, at Cheyenne Wells, CO. Supervisors Lenz, Shaw, Richards, and Zwirn are planning to attend.

Yuma Conservation District Annual Meeting:

Supervisors and District Manager Fell attended the Yuma Conservation District Annual Meeting on February 10, 2026.

NEW BUSINESS:

Farm Bill DCT Off-Boarding:

The Conservation District Technician (DCT) is currently funded through the Farm Bill, which expires on March 29, 2026. The Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB) has voted to use state funding to fill in the gap left by the Farm Bill lapse for this calendar year. The positions and work will not change, and the 80/20 split still stands.

Therefore, the DCT must OFFBOARD from the Farm Bill agreement, and then ONBOARD to the Unfunded Cooperative Agreement (UCA).

Exemption from Audit:

Premier Accounting is currently preparing the Exemption from Audit paperwork. The Exemption from Audit is due by March 31, 2026.

Witherbee Pit-Surety Release Request:

The board reviewed the letter from the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety regarding the Witherbee Pit – File Nol. M-2009-00070, Yuma County Surety Release Request. DCT Trejo reported that he had taken photographs of the site and stated that the area appeared to be in satisfaction condition. The board took no further action. District Manager Fell is to send a letter to the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety stating that the area as been inspected and is well covered.

Fact Sheet and Upcoming Listening Sessions for Perkins County Canal Project:

The board reviewed the fact sheet on the Perkins County Canal Project.

Press Releases:

The Board reviewed the press releases for the following:

- Winter Tree Care: Why Watering Matters Even in Warm, Dry Winters
- YCCD Announces 2026 Annual Award Winners
- Pesticide Applicator Recertification
- Applications open for 2026 Zwirn Scholarship
- YCCD Announces 2026 Raymond Peters Memorial Conservation Scholarship

Acknowledgements:

The board reviewed the email sent from Sandhill Bloomers thanking the Conservation District for their award presented at the annual meeting and the card from the Idalia FFA Officers thanking the Conservation District for sponsoring them to attend the Hi-Plains No-Till Conference. The board also reviewed the Thank You card from NACD for our 2026 Gold Level membership contribution to NACD.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A motion was made by Supervisor Shaw to dispense with the executive session. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Smith and carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Supervisor Zwirn to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Richards and carried unanimously with President Lenz adjourning the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Next Meeting:

The next Yuma County Conservation District meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2026, at 5:00 p.m., and will be held at the NRCS conference room in Wray.

Minutes submitted by: Shirley Deason, Office Assistant

Sonya Shaw
Sonya Shaw, Secretary/Treasurer

5/12/26
Date